

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
COMMISSION MASTER LIST – WILDLIFE
August 30, 2012

2012 Late Season Waterfowl Seasons/Closures – Final

In response to Commission direction at the August 2 meeting, two options were proposed for consideration in the Central Flyway, and are generally described below. There is no proposed split in the Pacific Flyway.

- 1) No change from the 2011 Central Flyway framework – no breaks within the season dates.
- 2) Mid-season split – Close the Central Flyway duck and goose seasons during Oct 15-30, and then re-open the season(s) extending the ending dates later into January.

In addition, other options could be considered including moving the closure period later into the season or offering the standard duck season framework in duck Zone 1.

The status quo season is considered by FWP to represent the most consistent opportunity for late season waterfowl hunting across years and FWP anticipates potentially substantial public dissatisfaction with any closed period during the fall. FWP recommends adopting Option 1, without a closed period.

2012 Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes Upland Game Bird and Waterfowl Regulations - Final

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and the State of Montana have entered into a positive, cooperative management agreement on the Flathead Reservation that provides for presentation of Tribal season-setting products to the FWP Commission. Regional FWP staff is included in the development of Tribal upland game bird regulations. Tribal recommendations are first presented to the Flathead Reservation Fish and Wildlife Board. The board votes on tentative proposals and opens them to general public review and comment. The board then meets for final adoption. Adopted final proposals are then presented to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal Council. FWP commission endorsement is subject to final Tribal Council approval.

Other than text style, format and/or presentation, the significant differences between these Tribal regulations and the current or proposed FWP upland bird and waterfowl regulations are:

- Tribal shooting hours primarily being sunrise to sunset for all game birds;
- A requirement that only non-toxic shot be used for all game birds on the Flathead Indian Reservation.

West Kootenai WMA Forest Management Proposal - Final

FWP has proposed to thin approximately 240 acres of dense conifer forest on the West Kootenai WMA in an effort to reduce wildfire risks, improve wildlife habitat, and improve forest health. A 2009 petition signed by 57 area residents urged FWP to conduct thinning on the WMA to protect

against wildfire. Thinning efforts will be focused along approximately 12,000 feet of interior roads and areas adjacent to private lands, with several interior thinning units as well. Approximately 300 yards of road must be constructed in order to complete the project. A DNRC grant for \$41,000 for fuels reduction has been received to help complete this project, which is expected to cost FWP an additional \$45,000 after the sale of merchantable timber.

A Draft EA was released for a 3-week period from July 31 through August 21, 2012. A public meeting was held on August 9th in the West Kootenai Community which was attended by 27 people. Notices have been posted in area newspapers and on August 8th the Tobacco Valley News printed a front-page article describing the project. The vast majority of comments received thus far have been favorable, with some concerns expressed for public safety, especially in regard to logging truck traffic. A Decision Notice will be provided to the Commission on or before the time of final Commission action.

Braun Property Donation (Region 6) - Endorsement

A landowner has approached FWP about donating property to the department for wildlife conservation and public use. The property consists of 1,090 acres of deeded land in breaks habitat along the north shore of the Missouri River, approximately 13 miles southwest of Big Sandy (Figures 1-3). Adjacent to the property, there are 475 acres of public DNRC and BLM lands.

Nearly the entire property proposed for donation is native habitat, much of which is classified as Tier I habitat (i.e., mixed grass prairie, shrub-grassland, and riparian habitat). The grassland habitat above the breaks is primarily mixed-grass prairie dominated by western wheatgrass with small patches of Wyoming big sagebrush. Several branches of Spring Coulee traverse the property, comprising a mix of silver sagebrush grasslands, badlands, and greasewood flats. The property appears to provide good mule deer habitat and also supports antelope, sharp-tailed grouse, and a variety of nongame wildlife associated with mixed grass and shrub habitats.

Wildlife Management Area Biennial Rules - Proposed

FWP has developed a set of proposed Commission rules that are intended to direct public use on all FWP Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs). In the past, there has been variability and a lack of clarity related to public use rules among the state's 77 WMAs. These rules will provide consistency and clarity and are intended for biennial updates as needed.

Elk Management Guidelines in Areas with Brucellosis Working Group – Informational

Wolf Human Dimensions Survey Results - Informational